

Great Eastern Linear Park, Lowestoft, Suffolk



Current Site information

Ward: Normanston

Site Reference: SK116830

Area:

Special Status:

Covenants:

TPOs:

Services:

Facilities on site: Tarmac pathway, cctv

Access: Various access points along the length

Species on Site: No special species known

Soil Type:

Issues:

The park is the remains of the old Lowestoft to Gt Yarmouth railway track and is very long but also very narrow for a park. It is in a dip and there are few locations for activities, there is limited lighting and a lack of visibility over or along it. There is limited cctv. As the town expanded after it was built, sewerage runs over the park and there are also drainage & fly-tipping issues.

Current main use of site:

The park is generally used as a transit route than a place to spend time and enjoy. It does however provide a key wildlife corridor through the town.

Future planned use of site:

The layout of the park prevents a lot of uses however there is a potential working party between the council and Ormiston Denes Academy as well as bringing other partners on board.

Whilst the site would remain essentially a transit park and wildlife corridor, there are improvements which could be made. Park users would like improved lighting and CCTV as the park is often used in low light and good segregation of pedestrians and cyclist areas would be safer. There have been suggestions that hides/screens to watch wildlife would be beneficial. Alternative forms of access have been suggested such as slides as a lot of the park users are young (this would have to be looked into for H&S reasons). Narrow play equipment and games such as hopscotch which could be painted on the tarmac would be preferred particularly in the areas close to the primary schools and maybe seating/bins in those areas reflecting the schools.

A further suggestion is a heritage trail/Lowestoft timeline which could be installed along the length of the park possibly using carved telegraph poles or sleepers as this would provide a reason for people to traverse the park rather than just for getting from A to B. This could be done pictorially as well as via an app.

Planting should remain natural and low maintenance whilst providing cover for wildlife and improving the sense of safety for park users.

The name "The Great Eastern Linear Park" is not used by locals who call it "The Trams". Although not strictly accurate it is possibly a better name than calling it "The Tracks". As "The Trams" is in current general usage it would seem sensible to formally rename it as such and erect new signage.

Resources Required:

The school would like to start by forming a stakeholder group which we would work on with them and this is currently underway. The initial activities would be litter picks and mapping the park so that an actual plan can be drafted.

Funding Required:

The school has a small fund which can be used for the park but other funding would be required however with involvement of the school and colleges as well as other key stakeholders this may open up potential grant pots for which we may need to provide seed money. Lighting and re-tarmacking will be expensive projects but cctv structures are in place although how they link into service would need consideration. Benches and bins would need to be budgeted for as would play equipment but potentially wildlife screens could be built as part of a project. Signage would also need to be budgeted for.

Stakeholder Group	Yes, forming
Friends Group	Not yet and may form different format
Maintenance Contract holder:	Norse

Current Benches, Bins and Bike Racks Inventory

This has not yet been completed.

Action Plan Further Information

Play equipment

Play equipment placed along the park would need to be quite linear and due to the nature of the park would either be good to have as natural wood style so that it blends in or pick up on the original use of the park as a train track.

Wild Life

During discussions with Ormistan Denes, the students said they would like the ability to study wildlife in the park and suggested that hides could be erected on the banks of the park. There are obviously pros and cons to this however the CCTV would help overcome the negatives in order to progress this. If this is an element of the park then it would also be useful to look at what habitats could be enhanced along the length for wildlife.

Artwork

A suggestion which links into the heritage of the park and the heritage of the town would be to create a heritage walk linking the HAZ to St Margaret's Church which is the premier graded historic building in the town. This could be done using marker posts along the path made out of railway sleepers. Each could either be carved or scorched with a design depicting something historical from Lowestoft's past and have a small information plaque with a QR code so that people can be linked to more information. This could be visual art and educational. We have local historians who could provide the information and we probably have artists who could create the artwork. Sleepers are relatively inexpensive and could be replaced if needed. It could provide another tourist activity linking into the heritage sector.

Railway Bridge

Talking to Ormistan Denes this would be a great location for a piece of graffiti art by either the college, sixth form or school and could maybe be a holiday activity with a professional graffiti artist. The higher levels would have to be tackled by older students and we would need to seek permission from Network Rail.

Plants

This park will never be able to be a manicured park however there may be areas where bulbs might be planted or even one or two shrubs like Cornus to provide interest in winter etc. Anything planted will need to be robust and able to stand up to competition.

Seating and Bins

If more rustic play equipment is considered then seating and bins should also be of a more rustic style, however it would be practical to go for a product that is more vandal proof given the location and also recycle. Below would be a Glasdon option.



5 year plan schedule of works				
Year	Item/project	Cost	Existing Budget	To be budget for that year.
2021-22				
2022-23				
2023-24				
2024-25				
2025-26				
Longer Term				